

University Park Village Hall, Will County, Illinois - Welcome to Will County. Welcome to the Second Congressional District of Illinois.

And welcome to the first meeting of the new South Suburban Airport Commission.

I want to thank and commend all the municipalities which have adopted the Intergovernmental Agreement in recent days and weeks. To date, at least 20 communities have passed resolutions to join our Commission. Also, last Thursday, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association endorsed this proposal and urged all 43 of its member-communities to join our authority.

Also, I want to congratulate and thank the four founding communities – University Park, Park Forest, Elk Grove Village and Bensenville – for their leadership, courage and vision. I particularly want to compliment the mayors and the legal teams of these communities for getting us to this point.

Today is the most significant step so far on a long road to building the South Suburban Airport. I believe we are closer to achieving our goal than ever. But there is still much more to do. So, I will be brief. Today, I am urging the newly formed South Suburban Airport Commission to consider several items:

1) I ask the Commission to select University Park Mayor Al McCowan as chairman, and Park Forest Mayor John Ostenburg as vice chairman. Both mayors represent parts of Cook and Will counties.

2) I ask the Commission and its legal team to draft and prepare to issue a "Request for Proposals" seeking competitive bids from any company in the world which has an interest to provide for the leasing, financing, construction and operation of the South Suburban Airport.

3) I ask the Commission to accept and review the credentials of designees for additional members to the Commission as submitted by each municipality which has adopted the Intergovernmental Agreement.

4) I ask the Commission to consider naming an unpaid interim executive director, who will serve as a point-of-contact and the initial staff person for the Commission.

5) Finally, I ask you to consider the formation of several committees within the Commission.

* The first committee should be a 7-member Executive Committee or Board of Directors, comprised of the 4 founding members, plus one permanent seat appointed by the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (to be a mayor from a community that's adopted the IGA); one permanent seat appointed by the so-called "Iron Ring" communities immediately surrounding the airport site (from among those communities which have adopted the IGA); and one permanent seat appointed by the Governor of Illinois – that person can either represent an IGA community or the Illinois Department of Transportation. (One of its primary and exclusive responsibilities will be on-site infrastructure within the 24,000-acre airport footprint.)

* A second committee should be for off-site infrastructure. It would oversee development outside the airport footprint in Cook and Will counties. This committee should be chaired by an "Iron Ring" mayor within the Commission. (The Iron Ring communities are Beecher, Crete, Monee, Peotone and University Park.)

* Finally, I ask you to consider the formation of other committees, including but not limited to, committees on finance; intergovernmental affairs; real estate acquisition; ethics and audit; public transportation and utilities.

Finally, I want to say how honored I feel to be working with so many communities whose leaders are motivated by one thing – building an economic future for the Southland, and at no cost or risk to our state, our communities or our taxpayers.